



Five A Day



Background

This lesson encourages WIC families to eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily for good health. *Five A Day For Better Health* is a national program to encourage all Americans to do so. This program is supported by a variety of national health authorities including the Surgeon General, the US Department of Agriculture, American Cancer Society, and the American Heart Association.

Most people are not getting enough fruits and vegetables. A National Cancer Institute survey found that the average intake was only three servings a day. And the choices were not always good. One fourth of all vegetables eaten by elementary school age children are French fries.

Building on the knowledge parents already have, this lesson provides parents with reasons and strategies for eating more fruits and vegetables and helping their children to enjoy eating them.

Heads Up — Tips for Educator

The book *How Are You Peeling? (¿Vegetal Como Eres?)* uses food art to show various emotions. The colorful fruits and vegetables have facial expressions that show a wide range of emotions. People of all ages find this book fun. It also offers opportunities to practice using words to identify common feelings – an important skill for parents and their preschool aged children. See the section on Book Sharing for specific questions you might ask to build these important skills, as well as to introduce fruits and vegetables in a playful way.

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If there are no children present in your class, show the book. Talk briefly with the adults about sharing books and telling stories. Note that sharing stories is a great way to help kids build skills –and it’s an enjoyable family activity. For example, it helps children learn about the world, allows them to try out ideas, and is a great time for snuggling.

This lesson models a self-discovery process. When talking about nutritional practices with families, please be sure to identify and encourage the efforts they are making to provide healthy food to their families, avoiding the “lecture trap.” Families can gain ideas of how to improve the health of their family by sharing their ideas and listening to the ideas of others. In a group setting you will be able to draw on the strengths of each family involved.

You will need to use three fruits/vegetables to make your mystery boxes. It is also preferable to use 12-15 real natural fruits and vegetables for the other family activities. This gives parents and children a chance to fully experience this lesson using all their senses.

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| Kindergarten
Readiness
Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy (counting and naming fruits and vegetables) • Math (classifying foods, naming shapes and textures) • Social skills and self-control (talking about feelings) • Physical (using touch to identify foods and put them in bowls) • Science (using senses to experience new fruits and vegetables) |
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Target Audience	Family-Centered education is targeted to mixed groups: adults with their children of preschool age.
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: Participants share their own experiences of cooking with and eating various fruits and vegetables. • Objective 2: Participants will use the Five A Day concept to count fruits and vegetables together – adults and children. • Objective 3: Participants will recognize that fruits and vegetables are healthy and can be fun to eat.
Time Needed	<p>30-45 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See section “Expanding and Adapting this Lesson.”
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music and player: Dole <i>Jammin’ 5 a Day Song</i> or José Luis Orozco’s <i>Esta es mi tierra</i> • Book: <i>How Are You Peeling?</i> by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers (and/or their <i>¿Vegetal Como Eres?</i>) • 3 mystery bags or boxes (see Getting Ready, below) • Meal signs: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Morning Snack, Afternoon Snack • Five bowls (or plates) • Brown grocery bag • 15 fruits and vegetables of different flavors, shapes and textures. For example: broccoli, orange, potato, banana, carrot, apple, cabbage, celery, pear, green pepper, Kiwi, onion, cucumber, lemon, green beans. • Handout for children to take home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Today, I Ate These Fruits and Vegetables (five to ten copies for each family) in English and/or Spanish.</i> • Handouts for Parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Tips for Parents (in English and/or Spanish)</i>

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Getting
Ready

1. Make three mystery bags or boxes. Make mystery bags by choosing colorful gift bags. Fill the bags with tissue paper or shredded paper. Or to make a box, cover the opening of an oatmeal box with a sock that has been cut open or cut a hole in the end of a shoe box. Tape the sock to the box and decorate box with contact paper or fabric.

Then, place a different fruit or vegetable in each box or bag. Try to select two easily identifiable vegetables (such as a carrot, a banana or green beans) and one fruit or vegetable that is less easily identified (such as a root vegetable or cooking green).

2. Review the book *How Are You Peeling? ¿Vegetal Como Eres?* Be thinking about how this book can be used to help families explore fruits and vegetables in a new way, as well as to encourage parents and children to identify and name feelings. See Book Sharing section of the lesson plan for ideas.
3. Copy parent and child handouts for your group (see Materials list).
4. Copy or print out meal signs.
5. Gather fruits and vegetables and put them in the grocery bag.
6. Put overview on large sheet of paper or flip chart.

Five A Day:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Mystery Box
- Book Sharing: *How Are You Peeling?*
- Family Activities: Meal Bowls
- Take Home Activities: Five a Day Count

7. Cue the music

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Overview

Time needed

Activities

Gathering

Opening Music

- Play music while families are gathering

5 minutes

1. Welcome and Introduction

- Introduce self
- Ask families to introduce themselves
- Note that class is for adults and children both

5 minutes

2. Warm Up Activity

- Pass mystery box/bag around room
- Let each person feel object
- After everyone feels, ask for guesses
- Note that fruits and veggies have different textures, colors, shapes

10 minutes

3. Book Sharing: How Are You Peeling?

- Read slowly, showing pictures
- Encourage participation from families
- Reinforce the value of reading together as family

10 minutes

4. Family Activity

A. Hands On Activity: Meal Bowls

- Place meal signs and bowls in a row
- Carry grocery bag around to the group, letting each person take out an item
- Ask them to share when they might eat that fruit/veggie. How might they prepare it?

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Overview

continued

B. Five A Day Count

- Display all the bowls of fruits/veggies
- Count to 5 with children, using fingers
- Ask one family to pick out items that they might eat today
- Ask another family to pick out five to eat tomorrow.
- Reinforce the concept that it is easy to eat five fruits and veggies each day, there are many interesting ways to prepare them.

5 minutes

5. Take Home Learning Activities

- Hand out stickers and paper to children
- Encourage them to make pictures
- Provide handouts to parents

Closing

6. Thank you and Goodbye

- Thank the group for coming to the class
- Answer questions as needed

**Total:
35 minutes**

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Welcome and Introduction (5 min)

Play the song "5 A Day" from Dole *Jammin' 5 a Day Songs* (or "Platanos y manzanas" from *Esta es mi tierra* by José Luis Orozco) to set a positive tone as families arrive.

Introduce yourself and ask parents and children to introduce themselves.

Tell parents the purpose of the class is to explore ways to use fruits and vegetables every day to help keep our families healthy.

Explain that both parents and kids will be part of this class, and that you will be doing some reading, sharing ideas, and parents and children will be doing some fun activities together.

Post the overview on the wall for the class.

Warm Up Activity (5 min)

Tell families you will start by playing a guessing game called **Mystery Bag (or Box)**.

Pass around one of the mystery bags and let three to six participants "feel" what is inside the box. Ask both parents and children to feel the mystery food in the box but don't tell what it is.

Next, ask parents and children to share their guesses out loud. When all have shared their guesses, uncover the food.

Pass around one or both other mystery boxes. Be sure the "hard" one gets a lot of adult participation.

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Book Sharing (10 min)

Tell families that they will meet some other very interesting fruits and vegetables in the book *How Are You Peeling?*

Encourage children and parents to sit where they are able to see and hear the story.

Read the story – showing the pictures as you go. To engage families in the story ask questions as you go.

Questions you might ask:

“How does the apple feel?”

“This kiwi is making quite a face. What do you think Mr. or Ms. Kiwi is feeling?”

“Can you make a face like our friend the orange?”

“How is the orange feeling?”

Family Activity (10 min)

A. Hands On Activity: Meal Bowls

Put the meal signs (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Morning Snack and Afternoon Snack) on a table or the floor in front of you.

Place a bowl in front of each category.

Tell families that in the next few minutes they will be looking at some fruits and vegetables. They will be sharing when and how their families might eat these foods.

Pick up your grocery bag, walk around the group, and let each family (a child, if possible) pick one.

Ask each family to put the veggie/fruit in the bowl for the meal when they would be most likely to eat it. Ask them to share how it is eaten or prepared in their family.

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“What did you pick?”

“When would you be most likely to eat this: breakfast, lunch, dinner or as a snack?”

Ask child: “How do you eat this ____?”

Or ask parent “How do you prepare this ____?”

Wait for responses – then encourage other participants to join in, exchange information or even recipes at this time. If there are no responses, suggest a way to cook or eat it.

Note: If the group brings up a lot of examples of fried methods, such as French fries or fried onion rings, mention other more healthy methods such as baking, steaming, broiling, or stir-frying.

As the families demonstrate how they use certain fruits and vegetables, you might ask them why they choose to eat fruits and vegetables. Some of the benefits might include:

- a great way to get lots of minerals and vitamins: Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Iron, Folic acid, etc.
- usually low in fats, low calorie, low in sodium
- high fiber (help prevent constipation)
- make great snack foods
- some can lower our risk of cancer
- decreases risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes

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B. Five A Day Count

Make sure you have at least 10 fruits and vegetables in the bowls. If there are fewer than ten, add a few you like.

Ask the children to hold up one hand and count their five fingers all together.

Explain that five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day helps adults and children stay strong and healthy.

Invite one family to pick out “5” favorite fruits and vegetables they could eat in a day from the examples in the bowls. Ask the other parents and children to name “5” they could eat tomorrow.

Point out the huge variety available and the many delicious ways to prepare them, as shared in the group today.

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Take Home
Learning
Activities
(5 min)

Invite children to choose some stickers to make a picture with their favorite fruits and vegetables. Give out paper or index cards to use with the stickers. Suggest that they can put faces on their fruits and veggies (like in the story *How Are You Peeling?*) or make up their own story.

Thank parents and children for sharing the many ways they can eat 5 A Day.

Share and discuss the handouts for this class:

- *Tips for Parents*. Highlight the books that they can check out from the library and other home activities that their families might enjoy.
- *Today I Ate These Fruits and Vegetables*. Provides a place for children and families to draw or list fruits and vegetables eaten in a day (provide multiple copies for families).

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Expanding and Adapting this Lesson

1. Use an Alternate Book with This Lesson

Button Soup by Doris Orgel (illustrated by Pau Estrada) is a story that uses a young child's friendship with a homeless person to retell the story of Stone Soup. The neighbors bring various foods to add to the soup, and the community enjoys the soup together. For school-aged children, *Stone Soup* by Heather Forest also retells the Stone Soup story, with bold illustrations by Susan Gaber.

Check the library or bookstores for displays of books during different seasons. You can use a book appropriate to Fall, Winter, Spring or Summer fruits and vegetables.

Oliver's Fruit Salad and *Oliver's Vegetables* by Vivian French describe a child's progress from not liking certain fruits or vegetables to discovering how much he likes them when they are in the fruit salad or grown from his grandfather's garden.

See the "Tips for Parents" handout for additional books.

2. Do a Simple Cooking or Tasting Activity

On an ongoing basis, invite WIC families to share their favorite recipes. Choose one to prepare and share with the group.

3. Make Fruit and Vegetable Puppets

Make fruit and vegetable puppets and hand them out during story reading.